

SERMON,

DELIVERED

AT LONDONDERRY EAST-PARISH,

MAY 5, 1816,

OCCASIONED

By the Death

OF

JOHN PINKERTON, ESQ.

BY EDWARD L. PARKER,
Pastor of the First Church in Londonderry.

Published at the request of the Parish.

CONCORD:
PRINTED BY GEORGE HOUGH.
1816,

REV. SIR,

At a meeting of the inhabitants of the first parish in Londonderry, holden at the meeting-house on the 14th instant, it was unanimously voted to request a copy of your Sermon, delivered in the forenoon of Sunday the 5th instant.—The subscribers being chosen a committee for that purpose, do accordingly request, in behalf of said inhabitants, a copy of your judicious Discourse for publication.

JOHN BURNHAM,
CHRISTOPHER S. THOM,
DAVID A. GREGG.

Rev. E. L. Parker.

Londonderry, May 15, 1816.

GENTLEMEN,

Agreeably to your polite request, in behalf of the east parish in Londonderry, and from respect to the memory of Major John Pinkerton, a copy of the Sermon occasioned by his death, though hastily composed, is respectfully submitted to you for publication.

E. L. PARKER.

*Messrs. John Burnham,
Christopher S. Thom,
David A. Gregg.*

Sermon.

PSALM CXII. 6.

—: The righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance.

IN the Psalm from which these words are selected, we have a very clear and full description of the believer's character, privileges, and final felicity.

The inspired writer does not bring directly into view the *grounds* of a sinner's acceptance with God, but the *characteristic marks* merely of those who are *thus* accepted, or that disposition and conduct which constitute a truly righteous man. The particular passage we have selected as the subject of our present discourse may not be unsuitably improved in reference to the late solemn dispensation, which has deprived the church, the town at large, and society in general, of one of its most respected and valuable members—one, who has long lived esteemed, and who has died lamented.

The least token of respect, which we can now pay to his memory, is to bring into view and briefly delineate a character so justly esteemed and deserving.

In the prosecution of our subject, we shall,

First. Notice some traits in the character of the good or righteous man specified in the Psalm before us.

Secondly. Shew in what respects he shall be *had in everlasting remembrance.*

Let it here be carefully remarked, that no one is righteous, in a truly scriptural sense, but he who has been made the subject of renewing and sanctifying grace. All spiritual life, every christian grace and virtue, must be derived from the power and grace of the Redeemer. There may be natural qualities which are *in themselves* amiable, and which bear a strong resemblance to gracious dispositions; but they are not of a truly holy nature. This the true Christian devoutly acknowledges, and ascribes every gracious principle and exercise in his heart to "the sovereign, resistless, and new-creating operations of the Holy Spirit." "By the grace of God," he exclaims, "I am what I am." All is derived from the eternal Fountain of excellence. Nothing is originally his own.—This being premised, I observe, that the first distinguishing mark given of the righteous man in the inspired Psalm which contains our text, is, that "*he feareth the Lord, and delighteth greatly in his commandments.*"

The true filial fear of God, resulting from a principle of love, is often in Scripture used to express the whole of that religion by which sinful men come to God, walk with him, enjoy his favor, and are prepared for a future and more perfect state. *This*, in its nature, is essentially distinct from that servile fear experienced by the ungodly. The one is the fear of a slave, the other that of a child. It is therefore said, the man that feareth the Lord "*delighteth greatly in his commandments.*"

Where the true fear of God possesses the heart, the man will love the divine commandments, greatly delight in obeying them, and only grieve

that he cannot do the things he would. This affectionate and impartial regard to the divine will, is, indeed, the most distinguishing characteristic of the true believer. A desire to please and glorify God is his governing principle of life.—He can, in a subordinate degree, adopt the language of his divine Savior, "I delight to do thy will, O God, yea thy law is within my heart." His regard extends to *every* divine precept. "He esteems all the commandments of God concerning all things to be right, and hates every false way." His habitual aim is to please, serve, and honor his heavenly Father. To this end his powers of body and mind, his talents, his acquisitions, his time and influence, are devoutly consecrated; in a word, he presents his body a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is his reasonable service. It is added in the description of the good man, "*He is gracious, and full of compassion, and righteous*"—"he sheweth favor, and lendeth."

In the verses preceding, his devout and reverential regard to God and his law are brought into view; in this, his benevolent disposition and conduct towards his fellow creatures. Indeed, my friends, love to God and love to man are inseparably connected. The one is invariably productive of the other. Without a benevolent regard to our fellow men, our pretensions of love to God are all vain. "*If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar; for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? And this commandment have we from him, that he who loveth God, love his brother also.*"

This benevolent regard to others will be expressed by the believer, not only in a fair, upright, and strictly just conduct in all his intercourse with mankind; but in a disposition to desire and to seek their true happiness, by compassionating their wants, contributing to their relief, alleviating their distress, and administering to their comfort, to their temporal and eternal peace, whenever it can be done. From his Lord's example, he learns to be gracious and full of compassion, as well as just — He does not, as strikingly expressed by the prophet, "hide himself from his own flesh." "If a brother or sister be naked and destitute of daily food," he is never heard to say, "Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled, notwithstanding he gives them not those things which are needful to the body."

It is therefore further remarked of the righteous, "*He hath dispersed, he hath given to the poor.*" Our Savior, on a certain occasion, said to his disciples, "Ye have the poor with you always, and whensoever ye will, ye may do them good." It appears, that God in his providence has thus diversified the condition of mankind on earth, not only that the poor and needy might be in a situation to manifest their patience, submission, and confidence in him under all the necessities of life; but also, that those, upon whom he confers a competency or abundance, might have frequent opportunities of testifying their love and regard to him by their kindness and beneficence towards their fellow creatures. To his ancient people, God said, "Thou shalt not harden thy heart, nor shut thine hand from thy poor brother; but thou shalt open thine hand wide unto him,

and surely lend him sufficient for his need in that which he wanteth ; for the poor shall never cease out of the land : therefore I command thee, saying, Thou shalt open thy hand wide unto thy brother, to thy poor, and to thy needy, in thy land." With this divine injunction, the truly pious man cordially complies. He does not avariciously withhold from the needy relief, when in his power to confer it.

" His liberal favors he extends ;
To some he gives, to others lends :
A generous pity fills his mind."

He regards himself as a steward, and his property merely as a talent committed to his trust by his divine Master, to whom an account of its improvement must soon be rendered. But while he buries not his talent in a napkin, or hoards up his wealth, neither does he dissipate his substance in needless expense, or disperse his bounty at random ; but in that way and manner which are likely to produce the most good to mankind, and glory to God : while he is liberal to others, he is just to himself.

It is therefore added, in the further delineation of such a character, "*He will guide his affairs with discretion.*" While he gives to one and lends to another as opportunity presents, he at the same time conducts his affairs so judiciously, with such prudence and economy, that instead of impairing, he maintains and increases his estate—yes,

"What his charity impairs,
He saves by prudence in affairs ;
And thus he's just to all mankind."

A discreet, prudent, economical course of life, is as much a duty as liberality ; yea, it is one

important source of active beneficence. He who is not prudent, cannot long, without a princely fortune, be liberal. This frugality, however, is essentially distinct from that parsimonious and sordid spirit which would pass under its mask. The true Christian is frugal, not for himself, nor for his family alone; but for *others*. He illustrates the apostolic injunction, "Let him labor, working with his hands the thing that is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth."

I merely notice what is further declared of such a character in the Psalm from which we are discoursing, "*his righteousness endureth forever.*" "His goodness is not as the morning cloud, and as the early dew, which goeth away." His pious and devout course of life, like the morning light, shineth brighter and brighter unto the perfect day. Being rooted and grounded in love, being governed by a divine and holy principle of heart, he is not fluctuating, but uniform and persevering in his obedience, in his works of faith and piety. Hence it is said, "*The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree, he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon: they shall still bring forth fruit in old age: they shall be fat and flourishing, to shew that the Lord is upright.*" Nay, his righteousness endureth forever, as it will in the day of final decision be adduced by his Judge; not indeed as the justifying ground of his acceptance with God, but as the evidence of his faith and love, of his interest in the meritorious righteousness and sanctifying grace of Christ. "And I heard a voice from heaven, saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the

Lord from henceforth : yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors, and their works do follow them."

Such is a faint and imperfect delineation of the character of the righteous.

Let us now,

Secondly, shew in what respects they shall be had in everlasting remembrance.

1. The example of the good or righteous man shall be long remembered.—This will live, and its influence will be felt, long after he is removed from the earth. A good or a bad example is by no means limited in its effects to the narrow bounds of our own lives. Generations to rise will be influenced and affected by it. While the example of the sinner will entail a long train of evils upon his posterity, the spirit and the virtues of the righteous may be cherished and embraced by numerous descendants, while his head is sleeping in the dust.

2. The benevolent exertions of the righteous to promote the temporal or spiritual good of their fellow creatures, will be long held in grateful remembrance.

The true Christian, as we have seen, lives not to himself. The glory of God, and the good of others, are the governing motives of his heart. While he justly values his own salvation, still a regard to the honor of God, and the interests of his divine kingdom, is the influential principle of his actions. To the promotion of these, he subordinates every other interest, motive, and feeling. Whatever may be the sphere of his action, whether extensive or confined, his aim will be to promote the good of all within his influence,

and thus advance the sum of general happiness. To this end, his prayers, his influence, his wealth, his time, his all, will be directed.

Efforts so beneficent to promote the glory of God and the good of mankind, will, depraved as the world is, inspire esteem and admiration, and be remembered by numbers with grateful emotions. Yes, "in succeeding ages, when the dwelling which the good man inhabited shall be mouldered to ruins, the passing stranger," to use the words of a beautiful writer, "will pause and say, There dwelt that friend of God, that venerable man, whose life and labors, whose cares, and prayers, and property, were devoted to doing good."

3. We further remark, the name of the righteous will be had in lasting remembrance.

"The memory of the just is blessed, while that of the wicked shall rot." Yes, while his body is consigned to its repose in the dust, the memorial of his name will be still fresh and fragrant as the morning breeze. Though it be, indeed, of little consequence to any one when removed, what his fellow creatures may think or say of him, being equally indifferent to their censures and to their commendations; 'still it is our duty to honor the memory of the righteous, and in general they are thus honored after their decease, and this honor is a token of their felicity in a better world.' Hence,

4. It is in heaven alone that the truly righteous will be remembered, and that forever.

The period will at length arrive when every memorial on earth shall be destroyed; but the names of all true believers, being found in the Lamb's book of life, shall never be erased, but

will be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ. All their works of faith and piety performed here on earth, will then be distinctly noticed and rewarded.—Not even a cup of cold water given in love to a disciple, shall pass unobserved by their divine Lord.—Not that these acts of beneficence will be regarded as the *meritorious* ground of their reward, but merely as *the evidence* of their faith in the justifying righteousness of Christ, and their meetness for glory. And in proportion to their activity and engagedness in his service on earth, will be their reward in heaven. Thus the servant, who had gained five talents, was made ruler over five cities. They will enter into the joy of their Lord, and shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. The expression *to be had in everlasting remembrance*, is the same as *to be had in everlasting favor*: hence it is the prayer of the Psalmist, “*Remember me, O Lord, with the favor that thou bearest unto thy people.*” Thus will the Redeemer remember, thus will he regard with peculiar complacency and delight, his true people. They will hear his gracious welcome, his divine benediction, “*Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in; naked, and ye clothed me; I was sick, and ye visited me; I was in prison, and ye came unto me: for inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.*” Then will they realize the full accomplishment of the Savior’s prayer in their behalf, “*Father, I will they that whom thou hast given me be with*

me where I am, that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me." "For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters : and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."

You have doubtless, my hearers, anticipated my application of the subject.

In the portrait thus hastily and imperfectly sketched of the good man, are there not clearly discernible many striking traits in the character of our departed friend and benefactor? Not that I design to eulogize the deceased : this is not my custom. A brief view, however, of the character of the venerable man, a suitable notice of his active beneficence towards us as a society and as individuals, is not only a debt of gratitude we owe to his memory, but may also contribute much to the best interest of survivors, by exciting unto love and to good works.

The aged friend, whom we lament, was born in the north of Ireland, in the year 1735, and came to this country at the age of three years. He descended from pious parents ; and, as I have learnt from himself, early enjoyed the blessing of religious instruction, accompanied by prayer, and enforced by example. Of the precise time of his first religious and saving impressions we are not informed. It was, however, in early life, that he joined in full communion with the church of Christ in this town, then under the pastoral care of the Rev. Mr. M'Gregore ; from which period his life and example have been uniformly consistent. Though subject to the passions, infirmities, and imperfections, of the people of God, yet through a protracted life he manifested a Chris-

tian spirit, and adorned his profession.—By diligence, prudence, and strict economy, he early acquired property sufficient to enable him to make a settlement in this town, and to commence business in trade, in which he was eminently distinguished for his uniform uprightness, integrity, and punctuality. He very strikingly illustrated that trait in the Christian character which we have considered, "*he shall guide his affairs with discretion:*" and in him also was fulfilled the divine promise, "*wealth and riches shall be in his house.*" He soon acquired the confidence and esteem of his fellow citizens, and was promoted to offices of trust both civil and military, which he filled with respectability. He was ever a firm and active supporter of moral, civil, and religious order. He was a devout observer of family worship; and, so long as his strength would admit, a constant attendant upon divine institutions. For many years he was an exemplary and useful officer as well as member of the church of Christ, and ever ready to aid in the proper administration of the Gospel and its ordinances.

Though esteemed and honored, he was humble and unassuming. A deep and abiding sense of his unworthiness and guilt led him to renounce every other hope, and to place his entire reliance upon the sovereign mercy of God, and the merits of the Savior.

Although distinguished by the smiles of Providence upon his temporal interest, which he was ever ready devoutly to acknowledge, still he was not without severe trials.—Frequently was he called to part with friends dear to his heart. He lived to follow, not only his parents, all his brothers and sisters, except one, but a wife and five

children, his whole family, to the grave. Amid scenes so painful and trying, he manifested a calm, a devout submission to the divine will.

But the most distinguishing trait in his character was, perhaps, his benevolence and liberality. He not only met with cheerfulness every public call upon his charity, but was peculiarly attentive to the wants of the indigent and afflicted of his acquaintance. Yes, the poor and needy ever found him a ready friend and benefactor—they often participated largely in his bounty. Never, no never, did the naked, the destitute, the hungry, leave his hospitable mansion unsupplied. In one word, he was a man of a truly public and liberal spirit.—A most convincing proof of this he recently gave, in the ample donations made by him to the respective religious societies in this town, for the permanent support of the Gospel; and also in the provision he has made for the education of our rising youth, in the very liberal endowment of an institution in this place, which does and will we trust deservedly bear his name.* As he drew near the close of life, he abounded more and more in works of charity and beneficence. In him was illustrated the words of the prophet, “The liberal deviseth liberal things; and by liberal things shall he stand.”

Such is a brief sketch of the character of that venerable, respected man, whose remains we lately consigned to the grave—and, my friends,

* Major John Pinkerton has left, to each of the two religious societies in Londonderry, not far from eight thousand dollars, for the support of the Gospel; and twelve thousand as a fund to the Academy lately incorporated in this town by the name of the *Pinkerton Academy*.

shall he not be had in long, in lasting, in affectionate remembrance? While his ashes are mouldering in yonder, distant, lonely yard, shall not his name, his example, his beneficence, live with grateful emotions in each surviving breast? Yes! so long as this town shall exist—so long as religious order shall here be observed—so long as the Gospel shall be preached in this place, and its institutions respected—so long as science shall be cherished, or our infant literary institution flourish, the name of PINKERTON shall be “spoken with affection,” and his beneficent provision for the security and advancement of religious and public interests shall be held in tender and grateful remembrance. Generations yet unborn will, we trust, reap the fruits of his liberality, and rise up and “call him blessed.”—In fine, he has lived an ornament to the town, and must be regarded as its principal benefactor.

Lest I should be thought to estimate too highly his munificence in this respect, it may be proper to remind you, my hearers, that had not some such provision been made for the support of the Gospel, you would have had but little security for the continuance of divine institutions among you. We live in a day of innovation, of division, and of change—and though now a wealthy, respectable, and united, society, yet in less than half a century you might have shared the fate of many others once as respectable, but now broken, divided, and desolated, through infidel and sectarian influence.

It is fully known how embarrassing it is to secure the prompt support of religious and moral order. Too many in every place are disposed to avail themselves of the laxness of our civil code

upon this all-important subject: but in consequence of what the deceased has already done, and of what may still be received through his bequest, you will probably be nearly, if not wholly, freed from the necessity of contributing to the maintenance of the Gospel among you; while its institutions will be thus perpetuated down to your children's children. But, my friends, let us be careful to improve the privileges so richly, so freely enjoyed. A price is put into your hands to get wisdom—see that you have a heart to value and improve it. And if, through the providence of God, the Gospel be now made without charge to you, you must feel your increased obligations to aid in sending the word of life to those who are sitting in the regions of spiritual death. “Freely you have received, freely give.”

To conclude—While we sympathize with the bereaved relatives, let us rejoice in the hope that our departed friend died in the Lord, and will be in lasting remembrance, not only on earth, but in heaven. Like Abraham, he has died in a good old age, an old man, and full of years—and we trust, like the father of the faithful, has been gathered to his people, to the redeemed of the Lord; and is now freed from all the remains of sin—from all the infirmities of human nature, under which he long groaned—from all the trials and afflictions of life, and rejoicing in the possession of perfect purity and bliss; while he has left behind, that which is better than precious ointment, “*a good name.*”—Peace be to his memory.—Amen.
